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[With Author's Remarks]

# ADDRESS

TO THE

CALIFORNIA

State Medical Society

BY H. GIBBONS, M.D.,

At the Expiration of his Term of Office as President.

[From the Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal.]

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# ADDRESS

TO THE

## California State Medical Society,

BY H. GIBBONS, M. D.

AT THE

Expiration of his Term of Office as President

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GENTLEMEN OF THE STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY:

I congratulate you on the condition and prospects of our organization. Not long since, the profession throughout the State was reposing ingloriously. A few years have made a wonderful change. Local Societies have sprung up in the populous centres and have become schools of medical literature and science. The State Society was revived two years ago, and already numbers in its ranks nearly one-half the active physicians in the State. The National Association held an annual session within our borders, reviving many fraternal ties which had long been severed, and kindling afresh in our hearts the love of the brotherhood. Our Atlantic brethren have determined to commemorate the occasion by the "Rocky Mountain Medical Association," composed of all who crossed the continent at that time, together with the representatives from the Pacific. One of our California physicians has been honored with the Presidency of the National body. A State Board of Health is in successful operation, and through it the profession is brought

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into official relations with the Governor and Legislature, and the regular school of medicine recognized as the legitimate guardian of the public health. A State Registry law has been enacted, to take effect on the first of January ensuing, and a law to compensate physicians for making post mortem examinations and chemical analyses. The Anatomical law has been amended to facilitate the study of practical anatomy. A State Pharmaceutical Society and a State Dental Association have been organized. A College of Pharmacy has been instituted, and is about commencing operations. The druggists and pharmacists of the metropolis have been required to submit to examinations in pharmacy and materia medica, as a condition of dispensing medicines. The literature of medicine has been enlarged by the volume of transactions of our State Society for the last year, the Biennial Report of the State Board of Health, and a Report on Insane Asylums abroad, by Dr. Wilkins, besides the regular report of our own asylum by the able superintendent, and one of the Vice Presidents of our State Society, Dr. Shurtliff. The volume of our Society contains eighteen papers on various important topics, by seventeen different writers. An immense number of papers have been produced at the several local societies, and published in the medical journals. And let me add, in finishing this picture of intellectual life, that the various essays and publications above alluded to will compare favorably with similar productions issued in the old States.

To organize the profession in this new country was no easy task. A more heterogeneous mass of material was never before collected. All the kingdoms and all the tongues of the earth were represented. Educated in different schools, with the habits of different nationalities, and speaking different languages, the medical profession of the Pacific Coast was at first without form and void. To bring order out of chaos was not the work of a day. Greater is the merit of those whose patient and untiring labor has accomplished the result.

From the beginning to the end, the work of organization and unification has found its opponents in the ranks of the profession. Some have been silent or negative in their opposition, others active and aggressive. But the recent revival of the State Society encounters no serious hostility. That a few individuals here and there should scowl, is nothing more than we must expect of human nature. There are men everywhere incapable of co-operation—like certain chemical elements, insoluble and intractable. They have never risen in motive above the sordid and selfish stratum. They have never recognised the common good, beyond their private interests. Our Eastern friends encountered a few such individuals in their late visit, and will bear them in memory. The time is now past for them to do us harm; and we can afford to pity them as professional eunuchs who have outlived their usefulness and will die unwept.

It is a great mistake to suppose that new countries are behind the old in the improvements and novelties of medical practice. Old countries may be first to devise, but new ones are the first to adopt. In the former arises the problem of old bottles for new wine; whilst there are no old bottles to embarrass the progress of new society. Patients in old countries are more timid: they are not anxious to be subjects of experiment. In new countries they bite at all new medicines. Physicians too, are eager to distinguish themselves, by showing that they are up to the times. Away out on the borders of civilization, they watch the journals for some new thing, and whether it be carbolic acid or chloral, calabar bean or cundurango, their prescriptions for it are written long before the medicine can reach them through the channels of trade. The country doctor whose office is the bar-room of a tavern in a mining settlement, and who handles pick and shovel, or scalpel and forceps according to circumstances, is likely to know more of the uses of the hypodermic syringe than the average metropolitan practitioner, in older countries. In populous centres



physicians march hand in hand, with even front, each restrained by others. But the doctor of the country town or mining camp is isolated and independent; and thrown upon his own resources, he is trained to self-reliance. He strikes out new paths. He gains experience—it may be at his patient's cost—but he learns nevertheless, and in process of time he becomes the right man in the right place. By and by the place is too narrow for him; and having earned some money and reputation, he removes to the city. Now, after snuffing the dusty atmosphere of the busy hive, he is apt to follow the bad example of a large percentage of city doctors—not always the best however—and turn up his nose at country practitioners.

Having had an extensive personal intercourse for many years, with members of the Profession throughout the State, I am induced to place a high estimate on their average intelligence and capacity. In the early days, many of the best intellects from the old states and from Europe found themselves floating over the valleys and mountains of California on the great flood of immigration, often without fixed purpose; and grounding at length by accident in localities where they were compelled to remain. It results that there are physicians scattered everywhere through the mountain towns and in rural districts, possessing abilities which would grace the ranks of our profession in populous centres where opportunities abound.

If this organization so auspiciously begun should be faithful to its trust and its duty, it will find employment enough in legitimate channels for the promotion of science, for the good of the profession; and for the benefit of society at large, to exercise all its powers, to give useful and agreeable employment to all its members, and to obviate the necessity of a corps of grumblers, which is nearly always in the service of plethoric and idle associations.

There always has existed, and there will continue to

exist, both in and out of the profession, a strong desire to suppress quackery by force of law—a desire founded on common sense and humanity. The law is, in theory at least, a protector of your person and your property. It provides a body-guard for the citizen, shielding him from theft and violence. It looks to the qualifications of men holding responsible positions and charged with the safety of travelers. It hunts out defective steam-boilers and decayed ships—deposits of gunpowder and nitro-glycerin—perils in the highway under foot and perils overhead in signs and walls. It scours the markets for stale chickens and meats of rank perfume. It punishes the apothecary for selling you an emetic unless he has learned the catechism of pharmacy.

All this is very good, and shows that law, so far, is a kind mother. But a kind mother will sometimes go to sleep and roll on her darling child and stop its breath. And so this mother-in-law, whilst she turns a sharp eye on the indirect dangers of her family, gives a free permit to fools and knaves of every grade to thrust what they please down the throats of her children, in the name of physic. She has no restraint and no punishment for men the most unqualified who take the lives of people directly in charge, provided they assume the title of "Doctor."

Many years ago there were laws in most of the States regulating and restricting the practice of medicine. But they were so abused and evaded as to do but little good; and when certain sects sprang up and claimed to cure disease by steam and lobelia, or by something made from nothing through trituration and dilution, or by some other project born of imagination, ignorance, or unprincipled craft, they were repealed without opposition. Of late a disposition has been manifested again to legislate on the subject, and in several States, laws have been enacted for the suppression of quackery. It is probable the subject will be brought before the Society at the present session—at least so far as to propose an enactment rendering it unlawful for

any person other than a regularly educated physician to assume the title of "Doctor."

For myself, having had my eye on this question for many years, I do not expect much good, in any way, from legislation against quackery, even if we could obtain such legislation. It is a question, however, whether it is politic in us to make the effort. Our motives are sure to be misconstrued. We shall be charged with seeking our own good, not that of the people. Let the people protect themselves against the curse, if they feel it. Should the Legislature, representing the people, move in the matter, so be it. We will encourage, not oppose. But until people and legislatures feel the evil and the need of a remedy, the legislation which we might propose and obtain, would scarcely be enforced.

This is a matter, however, for the Society to determine. My views are those of a single individual only, and I shall cheerfully defer to the judgment of my associates. Public sentiment would appear to be united against quackery. You will meet with no one but abhors the thing in general, and invokes legislation for the protection of society. The trouble is that each citizen, whilst detesting quacks and quackery in the aggregate, has faith in some exceptional system or individual—like Cowper's Mahometans, who, whilst united in condemning pork as a whole, each selected some particular tit-bit, until "from tail to snout the pig was eaten."

The position occupied by the medical profession in relation to legal tribunals demands our attention. As witnesses and experts, the commonwealth has claims on us, as on all citizens. But the duty bears on members of our profession with peculiar hardship. When it is considered that there is a limited number of physicians in a given district, only two or three it may be, if in the country, and that trials for homicide and many other offences nearly always require professional witnesses, it is plain that an unequal share of this kind of duty falls on medical men. And then there is an

almost universal disregard of the convenience and interests of medical witnesses exhibited by lawyers, who appear to enjoy their authority on such occasions, without fear of consequences immediate or remote. Add to this that no other class of men lose so much by detention from business, and no other occupation gives nearly so much unpaid service to society, and I think we may fairly conclude that an undue proportion of the public burthen is imposed on the medical profession.

It should be enough that we fulfil those duties to the sick and unfortunate which are strictly professional and which humanity seems to require. Beyond this, as experts, and in other relations to the public service, there is no more justice in requiring us to give our time and labor without compensation, than there would be in requiring gratuitous supplies to the poor of medicines by the apothecary, or of bread by the baker. The legislature acknowledged this principle at its last session by providing for the compensation of physicians under certain circumstances.

In the exercise of the humane duties of their calling, physicians are liable to serious annoyance from suits for malpractice. A certain class of patients make it a business to extort money in this way, by the aid of a certain class of lawyers who go halves in the speculation. The more worthless to society the lives saved by physicians and surgeons, the more danger is there that compensation will come in the shape of a prosecution for damages. It is probable that both plaintiff and counsel who engage in such speculations would mostly take to the highway for a livelihood if they had courage enough.

An effort was made to obtain from the last legislature an enactment requiring the plaintiff, in prosecutions for malpractice, to give security for the payment of costs if he should fail to sustain his charges. The bill passed one house, but was lost in the other. The only objection to it, I believe, was that it gave special privileges to a class. As no other class has the same occasion for the like protection

of law, the objection does not appear valid. I would suggest that the effort be renewed at the next session of the legislature. A law of this kind is not only proper for the defense of physicians in the exercise of their calling, but necessary for the service of humanity. As the case now stands, a physician who renders assistance in an accident or other emergency, especially if the injured party be poor and unable to pay, incurs great danger of a blackmail suit. The benevolent exercise of his calling may ruin him.

Within a very recent period, two remarkable trials have taken place, which demonstrate the necessity of legislation on another point. The first occurred in Pennsylvania. A physician charged with killing his patient by poison, was convicted and sentenced to death. The conviction turned on the testimony of the chemical expert. His testimony, though satisfactory to the court and jury, was considered so inconclusive and erroneous by scientific men throughout the land, that an effort was made to stay the execution and procure a new trial. The effort was successful, though barely so. On a second trial, other experts were examined, on whose testimony the prisoner was acquitted without hesitation.

The other case transpired in our midst. A woman committed a homicide and was tried on the charge of murder. A few medical witnesses on the part of the defense testified to her insanity ; whilst a large number of experts, called by the prosecution, pronounced the opposite opinion. She was convicted and sentenced to death. A new trial was obtained in this case also, but on the ground of some trivial informality. On the second trial, the usual method of selecting a jury was adopted, namely, to sift out every man of intelligence and retain only the stupid and designing ; and to a jury, so constituted, was assigned the duty of determining whether or not the prisoner was insane—conviction or acquittal turning entirely on this point. The medical testimony was nearly unanimous in the positive opinion that the accused was not insane when she committed the

act. But the jury rendered a verdict of insanity and acquittal.

That the mode provided by law for the selection of juries in important cases is a disgrace to civilization, no one denies. Perhaps the conservatism of law will yield to the correction of the evil, after one or two generations more of endurance and suffering. It is creditable to the intelligence of our citizens that, in the present instance, several days of arduous labor was required from the Court, involving the examination of several hundred individuals, before twelve men were secured, of sufficient stolidity for a jury.

Of more direct importance to us as a profession is the manner in which medical experts are selected. This is done by the parties to the suit, each party aiming to gain its point by seeking out, not the most competent witnesses, but those who will bend most easily to its purposes. Hence, there are always two sets of medical witnesses and experts, the one arrayed against the other, to the confusion of justice and the discredit of our profession.

The remedy is plain. Experts should be selected by the court, or by some other tribunal, and should hold the same relation of impartiality to the parties litigant as to the court itself. Medicine would then stand before the bench with dignity, and illuminate the path of justice. That a reform so desirable and so necessary will be accomplished sooner or later, no one can doubt. It would be done very soon if it were as easy to reform the law as to revolutionize certain governments of Europe.

Another subject which might properly be considered by this society is the plan of organization of the National body. Strenuous objections are proclaimed against that body. After every annual session, it is denounced as a failure. It does not represent the profession in America. Its labors are not creditable to it or to medical science. It is not in the right hands. It is not directed by Apollo, Hercules, and the gods generally. It fails, on assembling, to coruscate the hemisphere with its brilliant rays, and to illuminate the old world with its lightnings.

For the most part, these objections come from individuals who take no part in the enterprise, except to censure and advise. It is a cause of profound regret, that in all great undertakings, the men most capable in their own judgment of managing affairs, do nothing, but stand outside and throw stones. Perhaps their sight is clearer the farther they are removed from the din and dust of the conflict. It was so in the late war, when hundreds of civilians remote from the theatre of action, exhibited a knowledge and judgment far superior to those of the generals in the field. Medical associations are very generally blest with such critics and counsellors, who exhibit great zeal in pointing out the way, and still greater in not walking in it.

The cry is that the American Medical Association does not represent the profession, and the remedy proposed is that a small congress of shining lights be selected, who shall come together with great brain power and less capacity of stomach, and eliminate something grand, startling, attractive. They shall also have power, more or less, to legislate for the profession at large, in regard to education and other matters. Meanwhile the mass of physicians may, if they choose, build up a lower house, meet socially, convivially and so forth, and carry out the laws enacted by the hierarchs.

Now I believe that the National Association as at present constituted does represent the profession exactly. It is on the same plane—neither higher nor lower. The masses in the profession take a lively interest in it, feeling that it belongs to them, and proud of the privilege of ingress. They do not regard it with the jealousy which would be aroused by a more select and aristocratic representation. It is exactly suited to the taste and habits of Americans. It has much more influence over them than would be exerted by a body less democratic. What if it has not greatly advanced our scientific knowledge? What if it has not been able in a few years to revolutionize the system of medical education over a vast continent? It

has done much more by infusing the professional spirit into every portion of our territory. It has set to work, in the cause of their own education, the graduates and practitioners of medicine in every State and Territory of the Union. It has lifted to a higher plane the great mass of every-day practitioners. It has built up State, County and local associations by thousands and tens of thousands. It has bound in fraternal embrace the most heterogeneous elements from ocean to ocean and from the lakes to the Gulf. It has kindled an esprit du corps, a mighty element of power, indispensable to future action. It has sown the seeds from which a bounteous harvest will be gathered in the coming time. It has accomplished much more than could have been done through authority or command.

In the meantime, let those who are pained with the defects of the body, fall into the ranks and help to cure them. They can do much more as members and co-workers within, than as critics and censors without. The strictures in question and the plans of reform, come mostly from a few medical journals. Some allowance is to be made for editors. From the moment of induction to the post, an editor ceases to be an individual, and becomes we—weighed down with heavy responsibilities, and charged with the duties of universal reform. Woe to the editor who lets things alone—who troubles not the still waters—who sees nothing but harmony in the universe. Being ourself an editor, we understand the obligations of the office.

There has been much lachrymation of late over the low standard of medical education in America. There are too many schools, and the schools make too many doctors. The complaint may be true, but then one gets sick of the everlasting whine. It is perfectly natural that persons accustomed to the long and laborious education of the old world, should deem it quick work to make a doctor out of raw material in less than the standard European time for the preliminary drill. But the circumstances of the two worlds are widely different, and they create necessities of



their own. There, you behold forty millions of souls concentrated upon a spot that is covered with the end of your finger on the map. Here, the forty millions are scattered over a continent reaching from ocean to ocean, and from the Arctic circle to Cancer. There, in the climacteric of the nations, wealth, leisure and luxury abound. Here, in our obstreperous boyhood, there is no capital to be spared from physical development, no time to be spared from art and trade. There, the population is compact and fixed, and a doctor's patients are near his door. Here, except in a few ancient centres, they are widely scattered, and a resistless centrifugal force adds every year immensely to the range of practice and the demand for practitioners.

It is folly to talk of supplying this illimitable field with physicians who have invested five years of their life and five thousand dollars in an education. Such men do not like to ride from five to fifty miles to visit a patient, and run the risk of starving unless they have learned, in addition to medical science, the art of raising cabbages. The practice of medicine in the rural districts of America demands an adaptation, a fertility of resource, a tact, not acquired in the schools. The high-bred graduate, with the Bodleian library and all the medical lore of Vienna and Berlin in his head, would stumble on the problem of Nicodemus, and find a new departure necessary to qualify him for his new field of labor.

Notwithstanding the easy path to the doctorate furnished by the half-hundred rival schools of America, the path is still too difficult for many of the aspirants. In the absence of candidates possessed of wealth and pursuing knowledge for its own sake, the classes are composed mainly of students of moderate or slender means, in search of a living in a profession chosen by themselves and not by their parents. Ambition and perseverance are required to enable them to struggle through their difficulties. How many of our best practitioners, the most capable and the most honorable, have trod this thorny path! How many have been com-

pelled to teach school or to perform some other service during their term of study, in order to obtain the means of education! How many have been forced by misfortune, or necessity in some form, to abandon the college before reaching the goal!

In a new country like ours, there is some propriety in conferring degrees in certain cases where the required curriculum of studies has not been completed. If an individual who has practiced without a diploma and established an honorable reputation, and who may be unable to leave his home to complete the formulated course of study, should be able to pass a satisfactory examination in the several branches, what reasonable objection can be urged against admitting him to the doctorate? His fidelity has been proved, and his past life is a guaranty that the profession will suffer no discredit or disgrace from his membership. There can be no such assurance in the case of young men who pass through the complete curriculum, without having had an opportunity of resisting the temptation to play the charlatan. A diploma, be it ever so well earned, will not deter a man devoid of principle from abandoning the path of honor and wallowing in the filth of quackery. Of this we have frequent illustrations in British and European graduates, who are often the most villainous of advertising charlatans in this country.

If the power of conferring degrees were vested in a competent tribunal entirely disconnected with medical colleges, there would be no need of requiring any specified course of study. It would be sufficient that the candidate pass a satisfactory examination in all the branches, and exhibit proof of upright moral character. To this end medical education appears to be tending. The sooner it is reached the better. The ambition of medical schools would then be directed simply to the highest proficiency of the education conferred by them, as demonstrated by the success of the largest proportion of their pupils. The size of their classes and the number of their graduates would cease to be the principal object in view.

The periodical literature of our country also comes in for a share of censure. Metropolitan journals look down on their country cousins, and with the disposition which prevails in large cities to swallow up everything outside, wonder that subscribers do not concentrate their patronage on a few central periodicals. It is true that some of the journals published in remote quarters have no great literary merit, and not much originality. But they supply a local want and do good. They arouse the professional spirit, stimulate to reading, promote association, and aid in the general progress. The more pretentious journals of the commercial marts are mostly conducted in the interests of non-professional publishers, who use them as advertising mediums, and who are enabled, by having a wider field for circulation and by the indirect profits, to issue them at a low cost to subscribers. In remote places, with a sparse population, the journals are conducted in the interests of the profession and not of booksellers, and by editors who not only work without pay, but often at loss. Say what you will in their disparagement, the provincial journals are more strictly professional than the metropolitan. They involve greater sacrifices and are inspired by higher motives.

It is a great mistake to suppose that there is nothing gained to the profession by a periodical literature unless it be original and in advance of general science. While a few individuals in the foremost ranks are benefitted by such profound researches, the masses need rather to be instructed in what is already known. Our ordinary text-books contain a great amount of knowledge which most of us have forgotten, if indeed we ever learned it, and which is of incomparably more value than the novelties of the day. That instructor does the best service, who by word or pen distributes to the masses of the profession these forgotten treasures.

Thus, low as is the standard of medical education in America, and humble the pretensions of journalists in many quarters, we may felicitate ourselves that the establishment

of medical schools and journals at remote points, and the rapid multiplication of graduates, tend to diffuse a knowledge of medicine, a love of general science and a spirit of intellectual culture; and that the prolific increase of alumni leads with certainty to an increase in the number of those who shall arrive at distinction and do honor to the profession in the coming time. For, after all, the education of the schools is nothing compared with the self-education which is to follow. And experience has not proved that the long and procrustean drill of Europe makes better workmen in the field of practice than the energetic rough-and-tumble training of our own schools. Witness the medical and surgical records of the late war, and the present status of Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology in America.

Let nothing that I have said be construed into an apology for ignorance, or a depreciation of a high standard of education. My argument is pointed to that habitual and chronic cant and snobbery, which find nothing good at home and nothing bad abroad. Let us aim at the highest mark and at the same time encourage every effort in the cause of improvement, however humble. We have a country of small beginnings and magnificent distances—a country filled with circumstances and necessities unknown to any other land—a country in which things new and old, good and evil, are mixed up indefinitely. Looking at our past history and our present condition, I have faith in the future. There is a Vis Medicatrix in this young nation, or if you please a Divinity, which will shape its ends for the common good.

One word in regard to the practice of sending children and young men to Europe for an education—a practice that has no foundation in common sense, in reason, in experience, in morality, in patriotism, or in any other good thing. To say nothing of the moral contamination inseparable from a residence in the European Capitals, away from the guardianship of home, the idea of training a young man among a people and among institutions opposite in character to those with whom he is to spend his after life, is too prepos-

terous and unnatural in itself to result from thought —from intellection. It can be propagated in no other way than by insensible contagion, like variola or scabies. Our youth can only be trained fitly in the midst of people and institutions and circumstances where they are to do the work of life. They are stunted and dwarfed elsewhere. There would be more reason in sending children and young men from an old country to be educated in a new. But the people of Europe are not such fools as to do even this. The most they do is, after giving them a thorough home education, to provide them the opportunity of adding to it abroad. Let Americans follow the example and if they must send their children to Europe, first give them an American education as a basis.

As an American education is the best for Americans, so is a California education the best for Californians. Our educational institutions of all grades are copied from the best models, built on foundations deep and firm, and controlled by men who have the best interests of society at heart. Students and professional men who have been drilled in our own institutions will find themselves best equipped for the labors of life on this coast.

There is a wide field for the exercise of kindness and ambition in giving aid to our humbler or younger brethren, who are enduring the struggles incident to early professional life. Our sympathies should go down to these, and lead us, instead of cherishing a disposition to keep them from rising, to take them by the hand and help them upward. It is too much the custom to treat with indifference and neglect those of our number who are thus toiling through adversity and misfortune. The hand of a brother, extended in sympathy and kindness, will often save such individuals from unprofessional courses, and make them honorable associates.

That "action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions" is an axiom which holds good beyond the limits of the physical world, and which finds frequent illustrations

in the history of medicine. Theories and modes of practice are always oscillating from one extreme to another. The very popularity of a doctrine or practice begets opposition; and its culmination in the public favor is the surest prelude of approaching decline. The solids and the fluids, metals and herba, active medication and expectancy, rule by turns. The conservative principle, contending that "whatever is, is right," and the revolutionary, declaring that *whatever is, is wrong*, are always engaged in active hostilities, in politics, in religion, and in science. Best suited to men's temper and to popular prejudice, the latter has the advantage; and in modern times the wheel turns so fast that half a century is often sufficient to reinstate a discarded system, which passes for new because it has new trappings.

When the generation now passing away were at school, the Humoral Pathology, until then the ruling doctrine, was beginning to succumb to the assaults of solidism. Professor John Redman Coxe, who filled the Chair of *Materia Medica* in the University of Pennsylvania, was one of the last champions of the old system, and he went down with the sinking ship. Fossil as he was, a few of his pupils have lived to see his bones exhumed by another generation and honored with a niche in the modern temple of Esculapius—the bones, without the name.

It is to be lamented that the love of novelty enters so largely into the literature and the practice of medicine. It leads to a needless multiplication of text-books, differing one from another mainly in arrangement, not in substance. Many authors do nothing more than the cunning tailor, who takes the father's old suit and clips it into the modern fashion and fits it to the son. Their taste and ingenuity are invoked, rather than the deeper qualities of knowledge and judgment. The materials are made to serve the purpose of the blocks in a Chinese puzzle, the problem being to arrange them in the most striking form. An architect, required to build a house on an original plan, might succeed in constructing a commodious and desirable mansion. But

the chances are that he would do much better to choose from plans already extant. In the latter case however, he would gain no credit as an original genius.

Less than fifty years ago alcoholic drinks entered largely into the treatment of disease and also into the common dietary. In malarious districts particularly, the morning dram was an essential prophylactic. American physicians and moralists observed the evil results and instituted a salutary reform. Intoxicating liquors were banished to a great extent, from common use, and restricted to the graver conditions of disease. The reformation extended to the father-land, but only with partial success. Our British brethren were not prepared to sacrifice a wonted indulgence to a sentiment: nevertheless, a great change was effected in England, both in public opinion and in the practice of medical men.

But the tide of reform does not long remain at the flood. Certain English physicians entered with zeal upon a defense of alcohol as food and physic. The murky atmosphere of London was incompetent to feed the blood with oxygen, and the stomach, with persuasive eloquence, rallied to the assistance of the lungs. Not only did alcohol sustain the flagging life, but it was capable also of reducing the excitement of fever. Science came to the aid of the toper and confirmed his favorite idea that the most opposite virtues meet in the cup. Chemistry and physiology joined hands with fashion, literature and appetite, to set all the world to drinking.

Physicians in America were not backward in following the example. Discoveries leading to results so palatable, carried conviction on their face and were accepted with avidity. The age of whisky was inaugurated. But the flow follows the ebb. Many British physicians have taken alarm at the increase of intemperance, as a result of the universal sanction given to the practice of moderate drinking. Several hundred of the leading men in the profession have issued an appeal to their brethren, urging them to

restraint and caution in the prescription of alcoholic medicines. Medical men and associations in France are startled at the increase of intemperance among a people hitherto reputed sober, and are organizing an extensive warfare against the vice. A reaction is in progress both in Europe and America, which promises to convince the world that our profession acknowledges its moral obligations to society, as well as those obligations which concern more directly the bodies of their patients.

The havoc which the use of strong drinks has made in the ranks of our profession in California ought to deter us from their careless administration to our patients. It is a delicate subject to handle, and I will dismiss it by kindly inviting every professional brother who uses or prescribes them familiarly, to look back upon the long list of physicians who have died in California, and see what a large proportion of them have fallen victims to intemperance.

There is nothing which concerns the interests of humanity, whether physical, moral, or religious, that can be ignored by the true medical philosopher. Let us not suffer our moral nature to be dwarfed by the idea that our sphere of duty is limited by the obvious domain of therapeutics and hygiene. Neither the health of the individual nor the welfare of society can be separated from the cultivation of moral and religious sentiments.







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